

# Beyond “Turn and Talk” in ELT: Planning Productive Conversations for Learning

**Collaborative talk and engagement are important indicators of an effective English language classroom. Research of real classroom talk shows that the way we use language can make or break a lesson.**

In this webinar, we will:

- share strategies for analyzing our own teacher talk, noticing specific cues in student talk, and planning appropriate responses during all phases of a lesson
- consider how these strategies will help teachers make classroom conversations more productive and enjoyable



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# Beyond “Turn and Talk” in ELT: Planning Productive Conversations for Learning



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# Today's Big Questions

- What does research say about conversations in language classrooms?
- How can this research be used to plan effective instruction?
- What strategies can I use to make conversations more productive in my classroom?



# Session Plan

- Reflect on common speaking/listening teaching materials
- Examine typical language classroom interactions
- Identify conversational strategies to improve instruction
- Explore ways to support peer-peer talk



# Typical Page in an ELT Textbook

## Chapter 2 Listening



Part B Directions: Now, listen to Sam and his grandmother talk. After you listen, answer questions below.

### Chapter 2 Activity 1 Part B

1. What is Sam asking?
2. How is his grandmother reacting to his request to have a pet lizard?
3. What are Sam's reasons for wanting a lizard?



# What Happens Next?

## Chapter 2 Listening



Part B Directions: Now, listen to Sam and his grandmother talk. After you listen, answer questions below.

### Chapter 2 Activity 1 Part B

1. What is Sam asking?
2. How is his grandmother reacting to his request to have a pet lizard?
3. What are Sam's reasons for wanting a lizard?



# Typical Classroom Interaction

**T:** Do you remember if reptiles are warm-blooded or cold-blooded?

**S:** Cold-blooded!

**T:** Cold-blooded. Good!





# Reflect and Share

Do post-listening discussions often look similar in your class?  
If not, how are they different?



# What Research Tells Us

**T:** What does that mean? ← **Initiate**

**S2:** They need warm spot. ← **Respond**

**T:** Good! They need places  
that can help them keep  
warm. ← **Follow-up (Evaluation)**

# What is I-R-F?

A large, stylized letter 'I' with a wood grain texture.

Teacher  
**Initiates**

- ← Usually a question
- Teacher knows the answer

A large, stylized letter 'R' with a wood grain texture.

Student  
**Responds**

- ← Usually short and simple
- Comprehension check

A large, stylized letter 'F' with a wood grain texture.

Teacher  
**Follows up**

- ← Usually an evaluation
- Ends the exchange

# Research Also Tells Us

Students learn best when teachers:



- Act as facilitators for discussion
- Purposefully plan opening moves
- Carefully listen to students
- Support student conversations with prompts and scaffolds

# Session Plan

- Reflect on common speaking/listening teaching materials
- Examine typical language classroom interactions
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# Giving I-R-F a Makeover

Identify conversational strategies to improve instruction

- **Initiate**
- Respond
- Follow-up





# Let's Revisit Our Textbook

## Chapter 2 Listening



How might you initiate class discussion about the listening text on getting a reptile as a pet?

**Part B Directions:** Now, listen to Sam and his grandmother talk. After your listen, answer questions below.

### Chapter 2 Activity 1 Part B

1. What is Sam asking?
2. How is his grandmother reacting to his request to have a pet lizard?
3. What are Sam's reasons for wanting a lizard?



# Opening Moves

## Initiating the conversation:

- begin with an open-ended question
- start with a dilemma
- identify a practical purpose for conversation



# Try it Out: Initiating Moves

What is an **open-ended** question you could ask your students about a topic you are teaching?



# Opening Moves Game: Tug-of-War

## **TUG-OF-WAR**

**TOPIC:** Reptiles make great house pets!



### **PRO/FOR**

Reptiles  
are cute

Reptiles can  
teach me  
responsibility.

Snakes  
are  
fun!

I am not sure  
but I think  
reptiles can be  
an ok pet

### **CON/AGAINST**

Reptiles  
should not be  
a pet because  
they are wild  
animals.

Reptiles  
require a  
lot of care.

Reptiles are  
dangerous

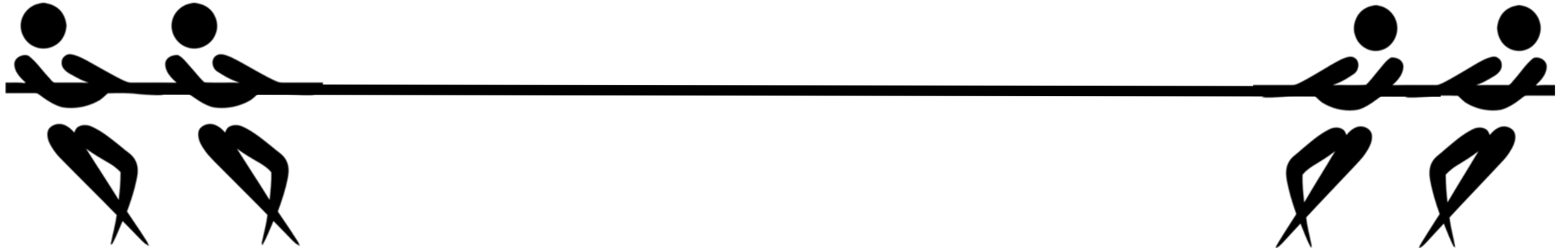
# Tug-of-War: Your Turn!

Do you agree or disagree? Tell us why in the chat!

**Topic:** Snakes are bad.

**PRO!** I agree  
that Snakes are  
bad because...

**CON!** I disagree  
that Snakes are  
bad because...



# Reflect & Share

What can we do to follow-up, after students respond?





# Giving I-R-F a Makeover

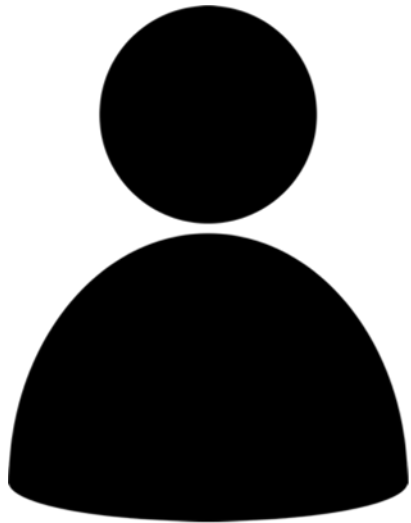
Identify conversational strategies to improve instruction

- Initiate
- Respond
- **Follow-up**



# Follow-up Moves

Teacher Follow-ups



# Three Follow-up Moves

## Querying (?)

- Asking a question

## Elaboration (+)

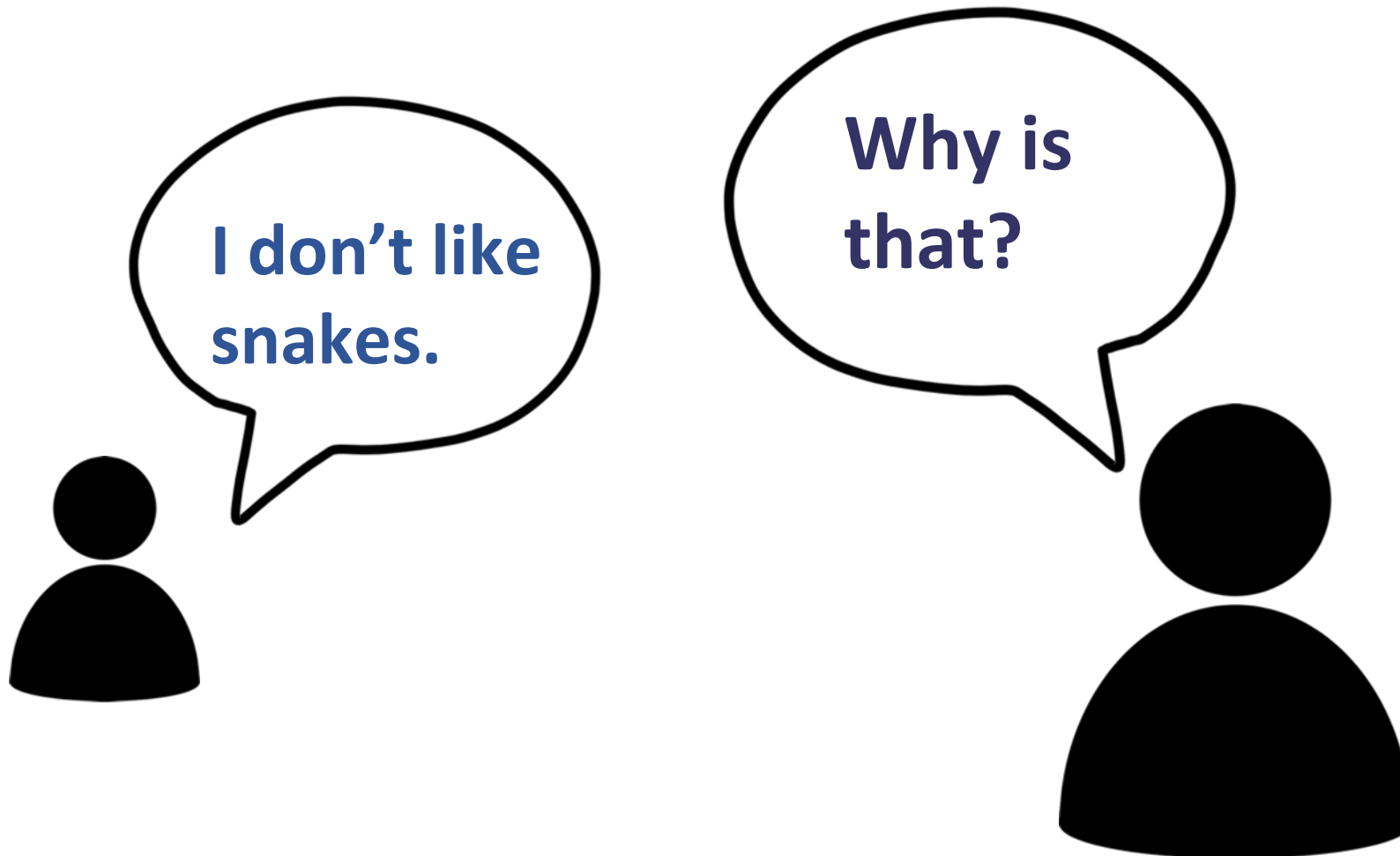
- Adding details

## Uptake (↑)

- Restate or paraphrase



# Let's Take a Closer Look: Querying



# Let's Take a Closer Look: Elaboration



# Let's Take a Closer Look: Elaboration





# Let's Take a Closer Look: Uptake



# Original Conversation

**T:** Do you remember if reptiles are warm-blooded or cold blooded?

**S:** Cold-blooded!

**T:** Cold-blooded. Good!



# Reflect and Share

Question:

How can we change the follow-up move?

T: Do you remember if reptiles are warm-blooded or cold blooded?

S: Cold-blooded!

T: Cold-blooded. Good! **← Change this follow-up move in the chat!**

# Here's What She Changed

**T:** Yesterday, we watched a video and learned about reptiles.  
What do you remember about reptiles?

**S:** Crocodile is a reptile.

**T:** Crocodiles are a type of reptile we learned about yesterday. What else do you remember about them?

**S:** They need sun to stay warm. They are cold.

**T:** Yeah! They are cold-blooded.

# Here's What She Changed

**T:** Yesterday, we watched a video and learned about reptiles. What do you remember about reptiles?

**S:** Crocodile is a reptile.

**T:** Crocodiles **are a type of reptile we learned about yesterday.** What else do you remember about them?

**Elaboration (+)**

**Querying (?)**

**S:** They need sun to stay warm. They are cold.

**T:** **Yeah! They are cold-blooded.**

**Uptake (↑)**

# Giving I-R-F a Makeover

Identify conversational strategies to improve instruction

- **Initiate**
- Respond
- **Follow-up**



# Session Plan

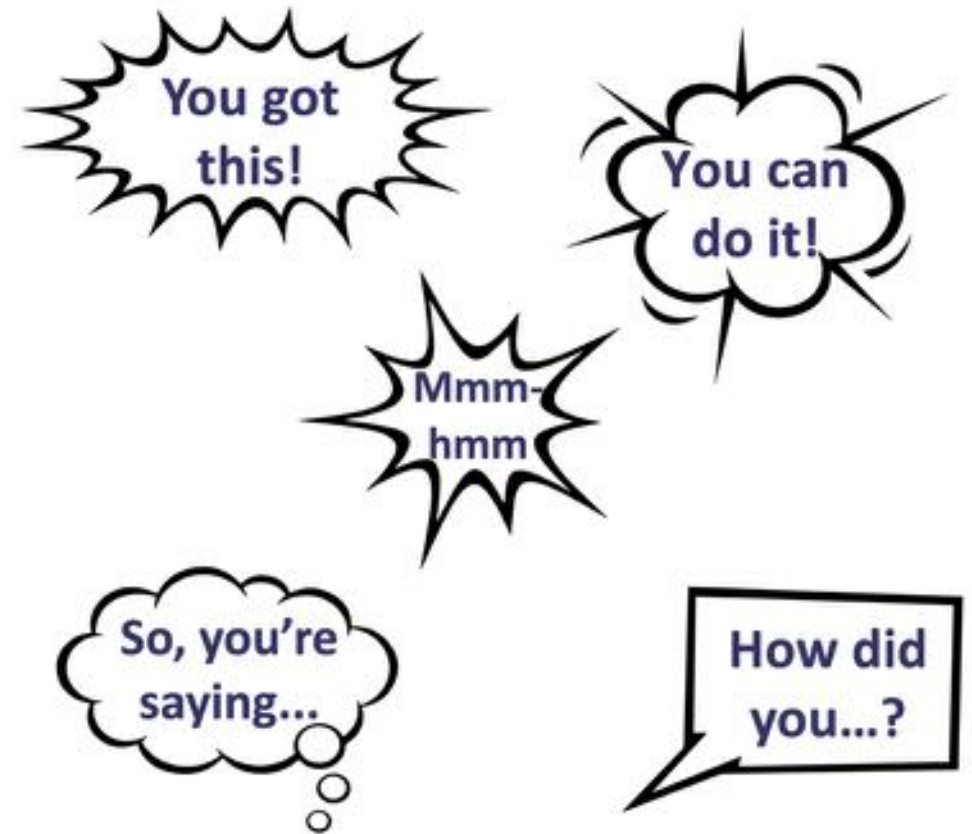
- Reflect on common speaking/listening teaching materials
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- Identify conversational strategies to improve instruction
- Explore ways to support peer-peer talk



# Peer-to-Peer Talk

Three kinds of supports from peer-to-peer talk

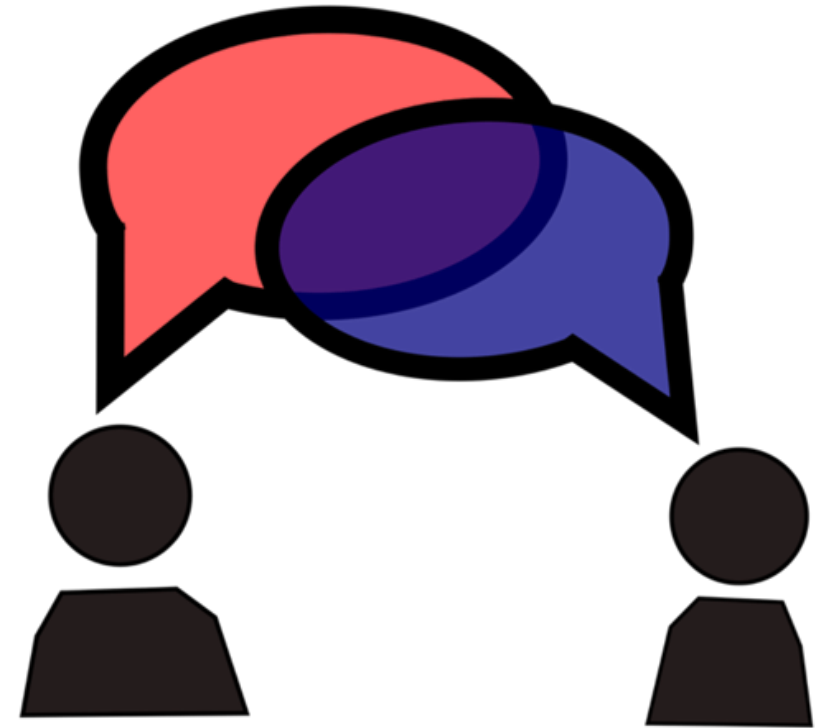
- Social
- Cognitive
- Language





# Setting a Purpose for Peer-to-Peer Talk

- Solve a problem
- Achieve a goal
- Come to a consensus on a dilemma



# Accountable Talk

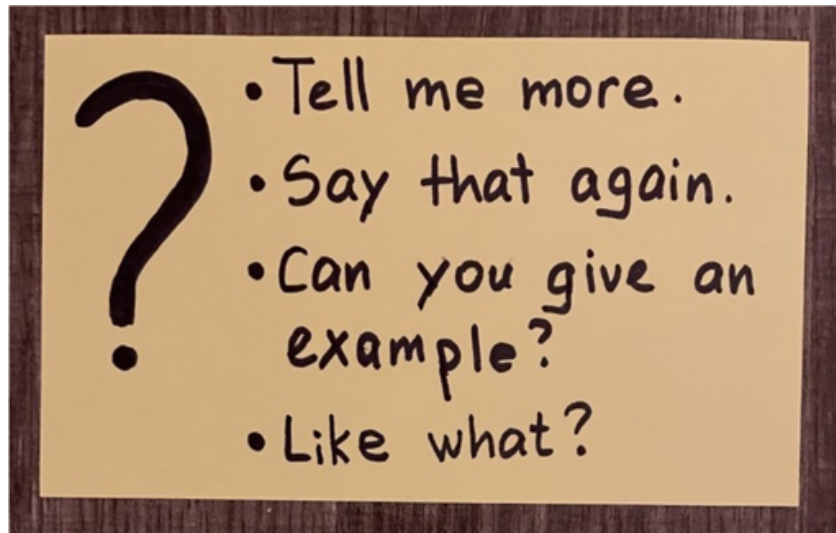
Accountable talk helps students by:



- Setting a purpose for conversation
- Giving strategies for keeping the conversation going
- Making them responsible for helping each other understand

# Prompts for Accountable Peer-Peer Conversation

- Agree/disagree
- Clarify
- Justify
- Add



- I agree/disagree
- That sounds right!
- I am not sure.
- I don't think so. I think...
- I am not sure about...

# Let's Look into a Classroom!

S1: I am not sure if crocodiles are reptiles, guys.

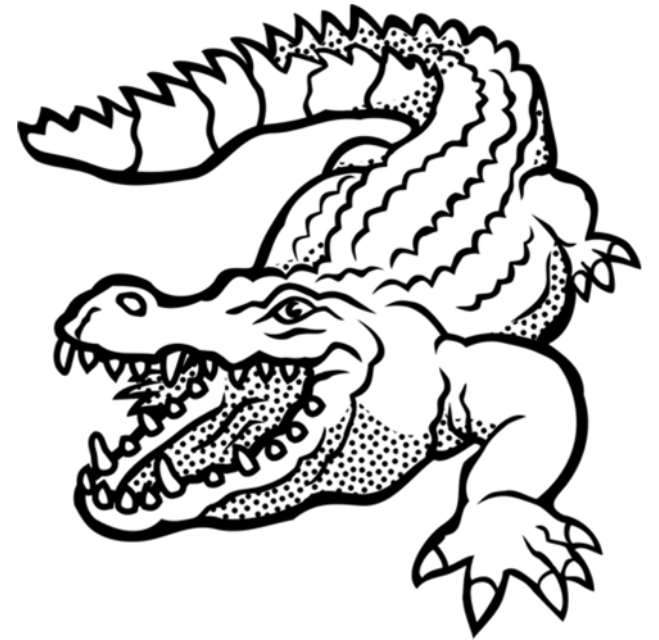
S2: I think yes... they are.

S3: What about frogs?

S1: How do you know?

S2: I saw a crocodile at the zoo and they said it is a reptile.

S3: Yeah, and crocodiles have scales too.



# Look into a Classroom cont'd

S2: So also our book talked about scales and how all reptiles have 'em.

S1: So wait... but frogs don't have scales.

S3: Oh yeah! I guess frogs aren't reptiles then.

S1: Then what are they?

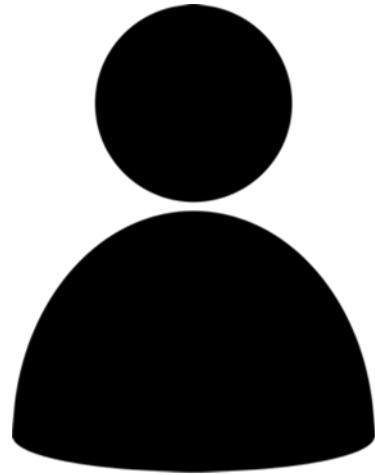
S2: Let's look it up!



# Yes, and.../Yes, but...

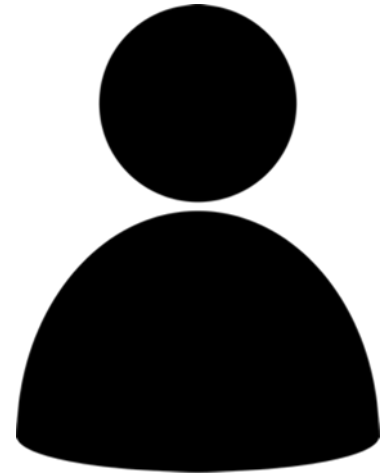


**Topic Starter**



**Yes, and...**

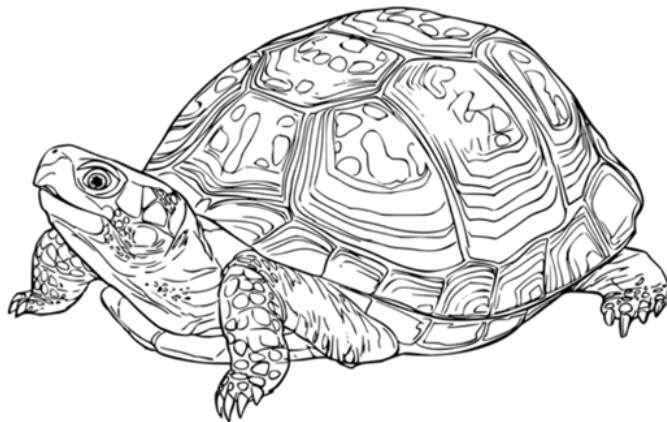
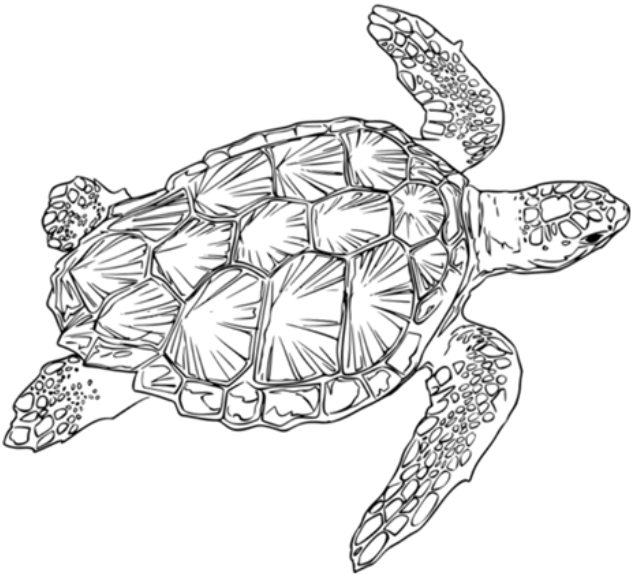
**Yes, but...**



# Let's Play!

## Topic Starter:

- I can't believe how many types of turtles there are!

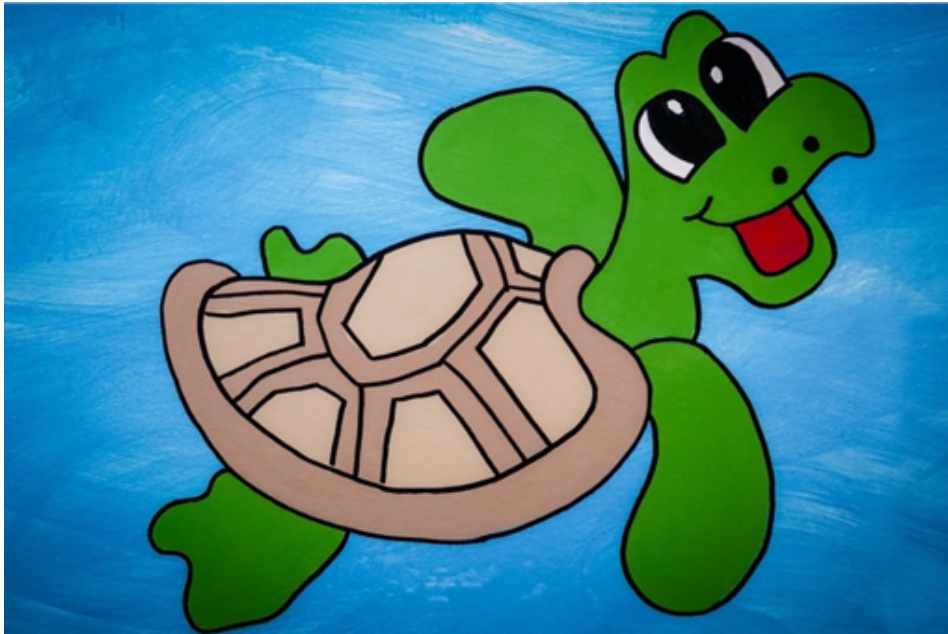


Yes, and...  
Yes, but...

# Your Turn!

## Topic Starter:

- Reptiles make excellent house pets.



Yes, and...  
Yes, but...

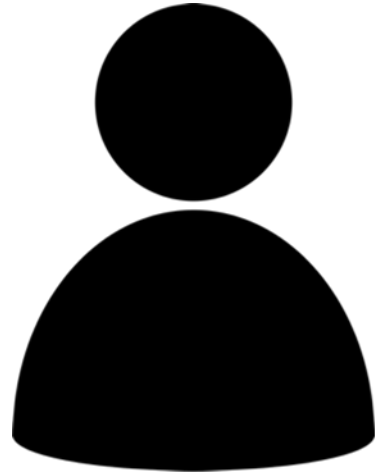
Share your *Yes, and/but...* statement in the chat!



# Idea Building Cards



**Idea:**

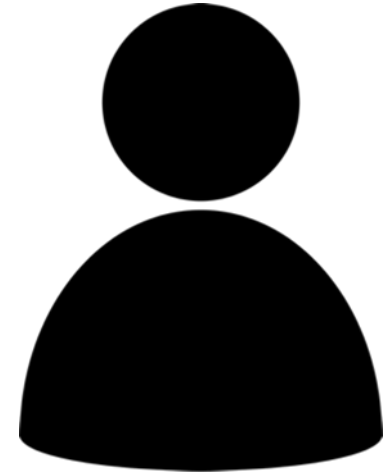


**Justify:**

**Clarify:**

**Justify:**

**Justify:**



# Idea Building Cards

- How do you know?
- Why do you say that?

## Justifying

(asking for a reason)

- Tell me more!
- Can you give an example?
- Like what?

## Clarifying

(asking for more information)

# Let's Play!

## Topic:

- Reptiles are cold-blooded.



# Your Turn!

Topic: Reptiles make excellent house pets.

Share your question prompt in the chat.



?

**Justifying**

(asking for a reason)



?

**Clarifying**

(asking for more information)

# Review: What Did We Do Today?

## I-R-F Makeover

### Initiating

- Begin with an **open-ended question**
- Start with a **dilemma**
- Identify a **purpose** for conversation

### Following-up

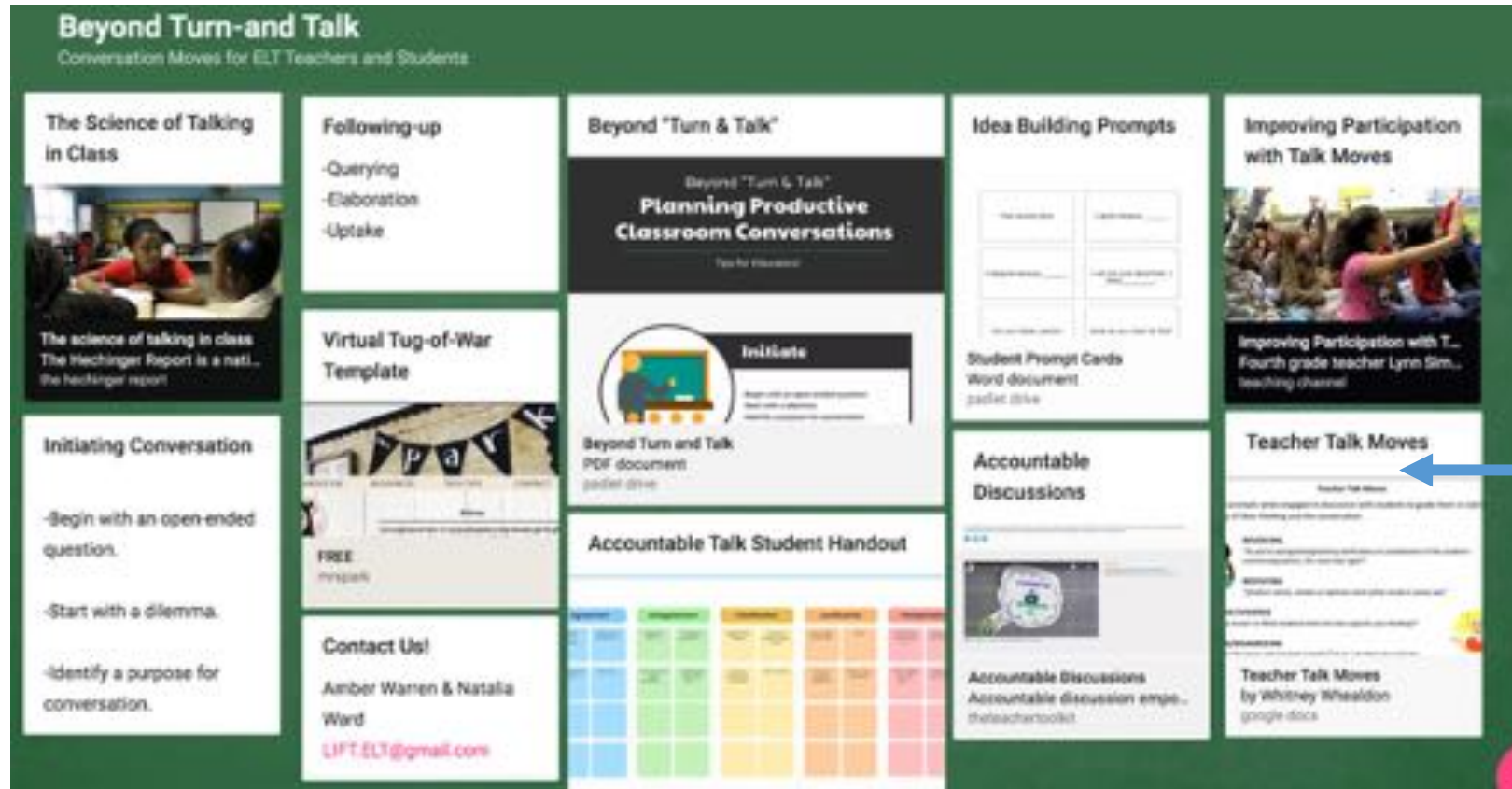
- Use **querying** to ask questions
- Use **elaboration** to build ideas
- Use **uptake** to rephrase what was said before

## Supporting Peer-Peer Talk

- Set up opportunities for extended peer talk
- Provide prompts for students to use
- Use games to practice conversation strategies
  - Yes, and.../Yes, but...
  - Idea building cards



# Resources from Today's Session



Available on the AE Live 11.3 Ning resource page and  
<https://padlet.com/liftelt/vvx5t9yphphkqe4g>

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# Thank you!

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# Reflection Questions

1. Which topics get your students enthusiastically talking in class? Do most of these topics come from your textbook, or do you (and students) develop them?
2. How can you help your students provide more detailed or rich answers during class discussions or group/pair work? What strategies have worked well for you in the past? What new strategies from this webinar would you like to try?
3. Do you typically use the IRF pattern during teacher-student interactions? Did you discover any strategies in this webinar that can make this IRF pattern more effective and engaging?



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